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DEPARTMENTALIZATION IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.
AMERICAN ASSN. OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS
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THE RESULTS OF A SURVEY CONCERNED WITH DEPARTMENTALIZATION IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS ARE REPORTED IN STATISTICAL TABLES WHICH ARE ACCOMPANIED BY DESCRIPTIVE COMMENTARY. FOR THE PURPOSE OF THE SURVEY, THE DEFINITION OF DEPARTMENTALIZATION IS RESTRICTED TO INCLUDE ONLY THOSE SITUATIONS IN WHICH STUDENTS RECEIVE INSTRUCTION IN THE VARIOUS ACADEMIC SUBJECTS FROM MORE THAN 1 TEACHER. OF THE 400 SCHOOL SYSTEMS RESPONDING TO AN INITIAL INQUIRY, 97 WERE FOUND TO BE PRACTICING DEPARTMENTALIZATION. INFORMATION ELICITED BY MEANS OF A QUESTIONNAIRE IS REPORTED CONCERNING THE EXTENT OF DEPARTMENTALIZATION (ACCORDING TO GRADE LEVELS) WITHIN EACH OF THE 97 SCHOOL SYSTEMS. VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERNS OF THE DEPARTMENTALIZED PROGRAMS ARE ENUMERATED AND THE FREQUENCY WITH WHICH THEY ARE EMPLOYED IS REPORTED. INFORMATION IS GIVEN CONCERNING THE FLEXIBILITY OF THE PROGRAMS IN ALLOWING STUDENTS TO MOVE BETWEEN GRADE LEVELS AND FROM ABILITY GROUP TO ABILITY GROUP WITHIN GRADE LEVELS. MISCELLANEOUS EVALUATIVE COMMENTS OF MANY OF THE REPORTING SCHOOL SYSTEMS ARE PRESENTED. THE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE IS REPRODUCED AND A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY IS APPENDED. THIS CIRCULAR IS AVAILABLE FROM EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE, NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION, 1201 SIXTEENTH, N.W., WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036, FOR $1.00. (JS)

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DEPARTMENTALIZATION IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Departmentalization at the elementary level is still relatively rare, and most of the plans which do exist are limited and experimental.

In preparation for the survey reported in this Circular, the Educational Research Service conducted a preliminary exploration with a postal card inquiry. Less than half of the more than 400 school systems which received the inquiry answered affirmatively the question: "Do you use departmentalization in any elementary schools?" The survey questionnaire (page 23), sent to these systems in May 1965, revealed that in many cases "departmentalization," as defined on the survey form, was not practiced during the 1964-65 school year. Only the 97 plans described in this Circular appeared to meet the specifications.

For the purpose of the survey, departmentalization was defined as follows: "Students have more than one teacher for their academic subjects (English, social studies, mathematics, and science). Each teacher is solely responsible for a specific subject or group of subjects. This should not be confused with the use of special subject teachers, such as art or music, to supplement the teaching in an otherwise self-contained classroom."

In the light of this relatively broad definition, it is not surprising that the departmental plans submitted by the responding school systems show wide variety. Because of that variety, very little analysis of the data has been attempted. The introductory text presents a few generalizations, but most useful to readers will be the system-by-system table on pages 6 to 10, and the comments of the respondents which follow the table.

In the system-by-system table, the school systems are classified by October 1964 enrollment, as follows:

Stratum 1 (10 systems) - 100,000 or more
Stratum 2 (15 systems) - 50,000 to 99,999
Stratum 3 (15 systems) - 25,000 to 49,999
Stratum 4 (57 systems) - 12,000 to 24,999

In the remainder of the report, the school systems are arranged alphabetically, by state.

Amount of departmentalization. Item 1 on the questionnaire dealt with the number of elementary schools in each system, the number of schools having one or more departmentalized grades, and the number of schools using departmentalization at each grade level.

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Twelve systems indicated that in ALL of their elementary schools, one or more grades were departmentalized in 1964-65. By contrast, several systems reported only a very small percentage of their schools as having any departmentalization. The extent of departmentalization in each of the 97 systems included in this report is indicated in Columns 3, 4, and 5 of the table beginning on page 6.

Level of departmentalization. Departmentalization was reported at all grade levels from grade 1 to grade 8, but in many of the systems the various grades mentioned were not departmentalized in all of the elementary schools. This is brought out in Table A, in which the school systems have been tabulated according to the percentage of their elementary schools which have departmentalization at each grade level. It can be seen that most of the departmentalization takes place at the upper elementary school level. It should be noted that this table is influenced to some extent by the over-all grade organization patterns of the reporting school systems. The totals for grades 7 and 8 are lower because only about one-third of the systems include grades 7 and 8 in their elementary schools.

In several systems reporting departmentalization in the primary grades, the plan was used with a nongraded primary arrangement. In other systems--Hawaii for example--the primary teachers exchange students for one or two subjects, such as reading or arithmetic. In the upper elementary grades, more formal departmentalization may take place and the practice is more widespread.

Of significance in Table A is the fact that some school systems reported as much as 90-100 percent departmentalization in certain grades. In some cases--Tulsa, Oklahoma, and Dallas, Texas, for example--the programs have been in effect for a number of years. In others, it can be noted that widespread departmentalization is taking place at the seventh- and eighth-grade levels, apparently as a preparation for high school. Of interest are the explanations furnished by the systems with a high degree of departmentalization in certain grades.

- SCOTTSDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT, ARIZONA--100 percent of grades 7 and 8 are departmentalized. Each academic subject is taught by a separate teacher.
- SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA--100 percent of grades 5 and 6 are departmentalized to a limited extent. In addition to special subject teachers for music and physical education, the classes in science and library are taught by a regular teacher of the staff with this specialization.
- TORRANCE, CALIFORNIA--100 percent of grades 7 and 8 are departmentalized. Programs are arranged to employ teacher strengths in academic areas; variations occur between schools with large and small enrollments.
- WATERBURY, CONNECTICUT--92 percent of grades 7 and 8 are departmentalized. English, mathematics, history, and science are taught by specialists.
- WEST HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT--All schools in the system have some departmentalization; grade levels were not indicated in the response. "A teacher at a given grade level may teach a subject to all groups at the grade level. This may be mathematics, science, social studies, or language arts. There are almost as many patterns as there are schools in the system."
- DE KALB COUNTY, GEORGIA--100 percent of grades 6 and 7 are departmentalized. Three or four

Table A

SUMMARY: EXTENT OF DEPARTMENTALIZATION IN INDIVIDUAL ELEMENTARY GRADES

Note: Figures for each grade represent number of school systems. Read as follows: 5 school systems reported that grade 1 is departmentalized in 1 to 10 percent of their elementary schools.

Percent of grade departmentalized	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7[a/]	Grade 8[a/]
1-10%	5	7	8	18	15	19	5	6
11-20%	1	1	2	11	16	17	1	1
21-30%	0	0	1	3	8	13	5	4
31-40%	1	0	0	1	1	2	4	3
41-50%	1	0	0	4	5	5	2	2
51-60%	0	0	0	3	6	5	4	1
61-70%	0	1	0	1	2	3	3	2
71-80%	0	1	0	0	2	4	3	2
81-90%	0	0	1	4	3	3	1	1
91-99%	0	0	1	5	5	5	1	1
100%	0	0	0	2	5	5	3	1
Total number of systems reporting departmentalization in each grade	8	10	13	52	68	81	32	24

a/ School systems tabulated in these columns are those where grades 7 and 8 are included in elementary schools.

large blocks of time, for math/science, language arts/social studies, etc., are used in preference to complete subject departmentalization.

- CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA--100 percent of grades 4, 5, and 6 are departmentalized. Social studies and language are taught in a half-day block; the remaining subjects are taught as period subjects.

- CLEVELAND, OHIO--96 percent of grades 4, 5, and 6 are departmentalized. "Language arts and mathematics are taught by the homeroom teacher. There may be an exchange of classes with other homeroom teachers who have special skill in teaching social studies or science."

- TULSA, OKLAHOMA--46 percent of grade 1; 86 percent of grade 2; 93 percent of grade 3; and 99 percent of grades 4, 5, and 6 are departmentalized to some extent. "One teacher (homeroom) is responsible for teaching reading, language, social studies, and arithmetic to each child for half the school day. Art, science, geography, music, speech, library, and physical education are taught by specialists the other half day during regular periods in specially equipped rooms."

- PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA--91 to 98 percent of grades 4, 5, and 6 are departmentalized. Under the most frequently used plan, one teacher is responsible for the language arts and social studies area, and the remaining subjects are taught by specialists. A second plan has the language arts and social studies taught by one teacher, arithmetic and science taught by a second, and the special subjects taught by additional teachers.

- DALLAS, TEXAS--82 percent of grade 3, and between 96 and 99 percent of grades 4, 5, and 6 are departmentalized. Language arts and social studies are taught by homeroom teachers, and the remaining subjects by specialists.

- EL PASO, TEXAS--98 percent of grades 4 and 5 are departmentalized in this 5-3-4 system. Language arts/social studies is taught by one teacher, arithmetic/science by another, and the special subjects by additional teachers.

- SPRING BRANCH, TEXAS--100 percent of grade 5 is departmentalized. (This is a 5-3-4 system.) A variety of plans are used to best suit the ability of the individual school's faculty.

- WICHITA FALLS, TEXAS--100 percent of grades 5 and 6 are departmentalized. Each teacher concentrates on one subject area.

- ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA--100 percent of grade 7 is departmentalized. Under the most frequent plan, language arts and social studies are taught by one teacher, arithmetic and science by another, and the special subjects by additional teachers. In some schools each academic subject is taught by a separate teacher.

- CASPER, WYOMING--100 percent of grades 4, 5, and 6 are departmentalized for reading.

Patterns of departmentalization. Indicated in Table B are the various forms of departmentalization listed in Item 2 of the questionnaire which read as follows: "Indicate which of the patterns of departmentalization listed below are used in your system. (Place a 1 by the type most often used, a 2 by the type next frequent, etc.)" Fifty-five systems reported the use of only one type of departmentalization, 42 used more than one.

As can be seen in Table B, among the 97 school systems no one pattern stands out as the most common practice. A number of those filling out the questionnaire reported that it was standard practice to tailor the departmentalization pattern to the skills of the teachers in the individual schools.

Described as "other patterns" were a variety of plans. Three systems limited their departmentalization to the teaching of science by a specialist, and one system reported that foreign language was taught to elementary students in this way. Several reported that arithmetic and

Table B

PATTERNS OF DEPARTMENTALIZATION: FREQUENCY OF USE

Pattern of departmentalization	Number of school systems reporting			
	Used exclusively	Used most frequently		Used least frequently
Each academic subject is taught by a separate teacher	13	15	7	5
One teacher is responsible for the language arts and social studies area--the remaining subjects are taught by specialists	7	7	16	4
Language arts and social studies are taught by one teacher, arithmetic and science by another, and the special subjects by additional teachers	14	12	14	5
Other patterns	21	3	4	3

science were the only academic subjects taught by homeroom teachers. Other systems described patterns of organization of teaching staffs similar to those given in the questionnaire item, but differing slightly because of teacher strengths in each school. Three of the descriptions are quoted below:

- DENVER, COLORADO--Language arts and arithmetic are taught by the "basics" teacher. Special subjects, such as science, social studies, art, and physical education, are taught by additional teachers.
- PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA--In one elementary school, the subjects of science, social studies, and mathematics are departmentalized. Each of three teachers teaches one of these subjects to all three sixth-grade classes. In addition, she teaches the other subjects, such as reading, to her homeroom class.
- HARLANDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT, TEXAS--Spelling, writing, art, and physical education are taught by specialists.

Grouping. Items 3 and 4 on the questionnaire read respectively: "Is it possible for students to move across grade level lines in your departmentalized program?" and "Is it possible for students to move from ability level to ability level in the same grade, in your departmentalized program?" Almost half (43 percent) of the 97 systems reported that students could move across both grade levels and ability groups. In 33 percent of the systems, students could move from ability group to ability group within their grade, but not across grade level lines; in three percent of the systems they were allowed to move across grade level lines only. These are apparently systems which do not group by ability.

In the departmentalized programs of approximately one-fifth of the systems, students must remain at their grade levels AND in their assigned ability groups for the duration of the school year.

A number of the respondents supplemented their replies to Items 3 and 4 with explanations of their policies and plans providing flexibility in the assignment of students to grades and ability levels according to their achievement in individual subjects. Some typical comments are reproduced in the section beginning on page 11.

Supplemental statements. Item 5 on the questionnaire was an open-end request for comments and opinions. Many of the responses to this invitation were comprehensive and enlightening. A selection of them is presented in the section beginning on page 14.

The bibliography on page 24 suggests additional sources which will be of interest in studying elementary departmentalization.

EXTENT OF DEPARTMENTALIZATION IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS 1964-65, IN 97 SCHOOL SYSTEMS

School system	Number of elementary schools	Schools with some departmentalization		Elementary grades dept'lized	Prevailing grade organization
		Number	Percent		
1	2	3	4	5	6
STRATUM 1--ENROLLMENT 100,000 OR MORE					
DADE COUNTY, FLA. (P.O., Miami)	152	10	7%	4-6	6-3-3
DUVAL COUNTY, FLA. (P.O., Jacksonville)	96	2	2%	5,6	6-3-3
ATLANTA, GA.	115	40	35%	6,7	7-5
HAWAII (entire state)	163	22	13%	1-8	6-3-3
INDIANAPOLIS, IND.	111	76	68%	7,8	8-4
BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD. (P.O., Towson)	88	23	26%	5,6	6-3-3
ST. LOUIS, MO.	135	44	33%	3-8	8-4
CLEVELAND, OHIO	131	126	96%	4-6	6-3-3
PHILADELPHIA, PA.	200	10	5%	4-6	6-3-3
DALLAS, TEXAS	130	129	99%	1-8	Varies
STRATUM 2--ENROLLMENT 50,000-99,999					
OAKLAND, CALIF.	66	6	9%	4-6	6-3-3
DENVER, COLO.	89	55	62%	3-6	6-3-3
PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLA. (P.O., West Palm Beach)	NR	1	..	6	6-3-3
PINELLAS COUNTY, FLA. (P.O., Clearwater)	72	11	15%	4-6	6-3-3
DE KALB COUNTY, GA. (P.O., Decatur)	64	64	100%	1-7	7-5
WICHITA, KANS.	90	40	44%	3-6	6-3-3
ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY, MD. (P.O., Annapolis)	62	6	10%	4-6	6-3-3
AKRON, OHIO	50	36-40	72-80%	5,6	6-3-3
CINCINNATI, OHIO	72	59	82%	4-6	6-3-3
TULSA, OKLA.	70	69	99%	1-6	6-3-3
PORTLAND, OREG.	92	8	9%	7,8	8-4
PITTSBURGH, PA.	88	88	100%	4-6	6-3-3

EXTENT OF DEPARTMENTALIZATION IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS (Continued)

School system	Number of elementary schools	Schools with some departmentalization		Elementary grades dept'lized	Prevailing grade organization
		Number	Percent		
1	2	3	4	5	6
GREENVILLE COUNTY, S. C. (P.O., Greenville)	75	10	13%	5-8	Varies
EL PASO, TEXAS	46	46	100%	4,5	5-3-4
SEATTLE, WASH.	86	20	23%	4-6	6-3-3
STRATUM 3--ENROLLMENT 25,000 TO 49,999					
MT. DIABLO SCHOOL DISTRICT, CALIF. (P.O., Concord)	33	18	55%	3-6	6-2-4
SACRAMENTO, CALIF.	54	54	100%	5,6	6-3-3
TORRANCE, CALIF.	33	33	100%	7,8	8-4
POLK COUNTY, FLA. (P.O., Bartow)	64	12	19%	1-6	6-3-3
MUSCOGEE COUNTY, GA. (P.O., Columbus)	49	35	71%	5,6	6-2-4
RICHMOND COUNTY, GA. (P.O., Augusta)	38	27	71%	5-7	7-2-3
EVANSVILLE-VANDERBURGH SCHOOL CORPORATION, IND. (P.O., Evansville)	38	30	79%	5-8	8-4
GARY, IND. (1965-66 data)	34	27	79%	4-6	Varies
SOUTH BEND, IND.	37	13	35%	5,6	6-2-4
DES MOINES, IOWA	59	32	54%	4-6	6-3-3
WORCESTER, MASS.	55	24	44%	1-6	6-3-3
PROVIDENCE, R. I.	39	1	3%	1-3	6-3-3
RICHMOND, VA.	42	1	2%	6	6-3-3
VIRGINIA BEACH, VA.	25	15	60%	6,7	7-2-3
TACOMA, WASH.	42	3	7%	4-6	6-3-3
STRATUM 4--ENROLLMENT 12,000 TO 24,999					
SCOTTSDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT, ARIZ. (P.O., Phoenix)	18	18	100%	7,8	8-4
ANAHEIM, CALIF.--Elementary School District	21	12	57%	4,5	...

(Continued)

EXTENT OF DEPARTMENTALIZATION IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS (Continued)

School system	Number of elementary schools	Schools with some departmentalization		Elementary grades dept'lized	Prevailing grade organization
		Number	Percent		
1	2	3	4	5	6
CUPERTINO, CALIF.--Elementary School District	37	20	54%	4-8	...
DOWNEY, CALIF.	18	12	67%	4-6	6-3-3
EL RANCHO SCHOOL DISTRICT, CALIF. (P.O., Pico Rivera)	11	1	9%	5,6	...
LOMPOC, CALIF.	13	10	77%	1,4-6	...
MONTEREY, CALIF.	16	3	19%	4-6	...
POMONA, CALIF.	19	3	16%	4-6	6-3-3
WEST COVINA, CALIF.	15	5	33%	4-8	8-4
ADAMS-ARAPAHOE JOINT SCHOOL DISTRICT, COLO. (P.O., Aurora)	19	4	21%	2,4,6	6-3-3
STAMFORD, CONN.	17	1	6%	5,6	6-3-3
WATERBURY, CONN.	26	24	92%	7,8	8-4
WEST HARTFORD, CONN.	16	16	100%	NR	6-3-3
ALACHUA COUNTY, FLA. (P.O., Gainesville)	26	4	15%	5,6	6-3-3
LAKE COUNTY, FLA. (P.O., Tavares)	29	8	28%	4-6	6-6
LEE COUNTY, FLA. (P.O., Fort Myers)	24	3	13%	5,6	...
EAST ST. LOUIS, ILL.	27*	9**	33%	5-8	6-3-3
VIGO COUNTY SCHOOL CORPORATION, IND. (P.O., Terre Haute)	35	1	3%	6	6-3-3
CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA	28	28	100%	4-6	6-3-3
DAVENPORT, IOWA	18	15	83%	4-6	6-3-3
WATERLOO, IOWA	26	16	62%	4-6	6-3-3
FAYETTE COUNTY, KY. (P.O., Lexington)	20	1	5%	6	6-3-3
LAFAYETTE PARISH, LA. (P.O., Lafayette)	21	6	29%	7,8	8-4
TANGIPAHOA PARISH, LA. (P.O., Amite)	18	10	56%	6-8	8-4

* Includes 4 elementary schools with grades 7 and 8.
** Includes 3 elementary schools with grades 7 and 8.

EXTENT OF DEPARTMENTALIZATION IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS (Continued)

School system	Number of elementary schools	Schools with some departmentalization		Elementary grades dept'lized	Prevailing grade organization
		Number	Percent		
1	2	3	4	5	6
PORTLAND, MAINE	28	14	50%	4-6	6-3-3
HARFORD COUNTY, MD. (P.O., Bel Air)	23	1	4%	6	6-2-4
NEW BEDFORD, MASS.	28	15	54%	5,6	6-3-3
PITTSFIELD, MASS.	20	6	30%	5,6	...
QUINCY, MASS.	23	10	43%	1-6	6-3-3
BIRMINGHAM, MICH.	16	7	44%	4-6	6-3-3
SAGINAW, MICH.	27	5	19%	4-6	6-3-3
ST. JOSEPH, MO.	25	25	100%	7,8	8-4
ELIZABETH, N. J.	18	2	11%	4-6	6-3-3
PATERSON, N. J.	25	6	24%	6-8	8-4
FARMINGDALE, N. Y.	6	5	83%	4-6	...
BUNCOMBE COUNTY, N. C. (P.O., Asheville)	26	14	54%	7,8	8-4
NASH COUNTY, N. C. (P.O., Nashville)	24	6	25%	7,8	8-4
WAYNE COUNTY, N. C. (P.O., Goldsboro)	12	5	42%	7,8	8-4
CANTON, OHIO	27	1	4%	6	6-2-4
CLEVELAND HEIGHTS-UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS SCHOOL DISTRICT, OHIO (P.O., Cleveland)	11	5	45%	4-6	6-3-3
BEAVERTON, OREG.	20	2	10%	4-6	...
ALLENTOWN, PA.	22	4	18%	4-6	6-3-3
ERIE, PA.	23	3	13%	4-6	6-3-3
READING, PA.	23	4	17%	5,6	6-3-3
COOPER RIVER SCHOOL DISTRICT, S. C. (P.O., North Charleston)	21	13	62%	6,7	7-5

(Continued)

EXTENT OF DEPARTMENTALIZATION IN INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS (Continued)

School system	Number of elementary schools	Schools with some departmentalization		Elementary grades dept'lized	Prevailing grade organization
		Number	Percent		
1	2	3	4	5	6
FLORENCE, S. C.	15	3	20%	4-6	6-3-3
HORRY COUNTY, S. C. (P.O., Conway)	30	12	40%	5,6	6-6
KNOX COUNTY, TENN. (P.O., Knoxville)	37	29	78%	6-8	8-4
HARLANDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT, TEXAS (P.O., San Antonio)	12	1	8%	6	6-3-3
SPRING BRANCH SCHOOL DISTRICT, TEXAS (P.O., Houston)	17	17	100%	4,5	5-3-4
WICHITA FALLS, TEXAS	25	25	100%	4-6	...
ALEXANDRIA, VA.	15	15	100%	7	7-5
LYNCHBURG, VA.	25	7	28%	7	7-5
SHORELINE SCHOOL DISTRICT, WASH. (P.O., Seattle)	18	10	56%	3-6	6-3-3
CABELL COUNTY, W. VA. (P.O., Huntington)	45	13	29%	4-6	6-3-3
RALEIGH COUNTY, W. VA. (P.O., Beckley)	67	27	40%	4-6	6-3-3
CASPER, WYO.	19	19	100%	2-6	...

FLEXIBILITY TO RECOGNIZE INDIVIDUAL STUDENT ABILITY AND ACHIEVEMENT

A. Moving Across Grade Lines

Item 3 on the questionnaire read: "Is it possible for students to move across grade lines in your departmentalized program? If yes, please explain." Following are some typical explanations.

Cupertino, California

"One of the basic understandings we have is that we maintain an 'open ended' curriculum. All schools must make allowance for the child who may move faster than others. This is usually done through a grouping plan that allows movement of a child from one group to another working on a higher or lower level."

* * *

Torrance, California

"We are committed, philosophically, to a program of identifying individual differences and teaching to the range of abilities identified. Therefore, there will be intra-class groupings within departmentalized classes."

* * *

West Hartford, Connecticut

"It has been difficult to move children across grade levels but we have made some significant progress in this area and the more time that is spent in the planning and development of the program the more mobility will be possible. It is a matter of record keeping and evaluation that makes this difficult. For years children have always been able to work in materials at their particular level of development and to do so without any formal structure or program as such. The movement has now become more official and planned, and is part of a cooperative effort of the administration, the curriculum staff and teachers. In the past these decisions were largely in the hands of the teachers alone with some degree of approval or encouragement by the administration."

* * *

Pinellas County, Florida

"Within the grade structure, sub-grouping is practiced to achieve instruction at the level needed regardless of grade assignment; in an adaptation of the 'dual progress' plan, children work at achievement levels in the language arts and mathematics in the morning, regardless of grade assignment; in the afternoon they work as heterogeneous groups at grade level."

* * *

Anne Arundel County, Maryland

"In four schools, grades 4, 5, and 6 are regrouped for reading and for arithmetic on achievement levels without regard for grade level."

* * *

Akron, Ohio

"In the sections of high achievers, the children are taken along in the work according to their interest and understanding. This reaches out horizontally in enrichment and vertically beyond grade level."

* * *

FLEXIBILITY (Continued)

Cincinnati, Ohio

"In some areas of the curriculum such as art and crafts, music, and physical education, pupils from grades 4, 5, and 6 participate together in joint activities and projects which cut across grade lines. In the other areas pupils are grouped within a class to provide for individual needs and differences."

* * *

Spring Branch, Texas

"Our elementary schools operate as nongraded or continuous progress. The curriculum in reading and arithmetic is arranged in a series of steps or levels."

B. Moving Across Ability Levels

Item 4 on the questionnaire read: "Is it possible for students to move from ability level to ability level in the same grade, in your departmentalized program? If yes, please explain." In the following selected comments, it is apparent that two types of procedure are being described. In one, the student moves each day from one ability level to another in accordance with his ability in a specific subject. In the other, students may move throughout the year to different ability level classes if their total performance warrants it.

Stamford, Connecticut

"Each academic teacher groups for instruction (usually three groups). Students may be reclassified to another group level within the same classroom."

* * *

Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation, Indiana

"The classes organized on ability levels are flexible enough to permit change from one group to another."

* * *

Gary, Indiana

"In establishing class groups, consideration is given to allowing children to make flexible moves within the class in the areas of language arts and arithmetic."

* * *

Cedar Rapids, Iowa

"Cross grouping is practiced. We do not have such a classification as ability levels; pupils who make more than normal progress may be moved to a group (within the classroom) which will more adequately challenge the pupil."

* * *

Waterloo, Iowa

"In our skill subjects, such as reading, where children are grouped by ability, we try to make it possible for a child to move to another group if he shows he would be helped. Observation and instructional tests provide information."

* * *

FLEXIBILITY (Continued)

Worcester, Massachusetts

"Since children are usually grouped by achievement in language arts and arithmetic in grades 4, 5, and 6, there is movement from one ability level to another in whatever subject there is progress. In grades 7 and 8 located in elementary school buildings there is no such provision."

* * *

Knox County, Tennessee

"In the larger schools, where there are three or more sections at a grade level, students heterogeneously assigned to home groups change classes every 45 minutes in all subject areas except Language Arts (90 minutes), forming new groups based on interest and ability. At the end of each period, a new grouping is formed cutting across homegroup lines at that grade level."

* * *

Alexandria, Virginia

"Grouping is flexible within the seventh grade. Pupils may move from group to group within a subject area. Each subject is grouped by ability when there are sufficient students."

* * *

Seattle, Washington

"Three schools operate under what we have called the 'language arts block' in which children change classrooms within a grade and meet on an ability level for all phases of the language arts program."

COMMENTS AND EVALUATIONS

Item 5 on the questionnaire read as follows: "In the space below, we would appreciate any comments you might wish to add regarding your system's experience with elementary departmentalization. Comments might cover scheduling and grouping practices; teacher, parent, and student reactions; advantages and disadvantages, etc. It is hoped that an 'open-end' item of this type will enable you to describe your program more fully than would additional forced-choice items." Quoted below are a number of the responses received from participants in the study.

Lompoc, California

"The Reading and Mathematics Levels Program incorporates the philosophy that continuous progress and growth of children should receive major emphasis in education. It provides class placement and group placement within a class which will better serve the total development of each child. It also permits flexibility for movement of children to successive reading levels at any time.

"The chief characteristics of our Reading and Mathematics Levels Program are that it:

1. Places pupils in achievement groups based on readiness for growth in reading and math.
2. Permits each child to progress continuously through 15 reading and math levels according to his individual growth.
3. Maintains the best accepted teaching techniques.
4. Emphasizes the natural growth and development of each child rather than comparing his achievement with that of other children.
5. Provides for flexibility in the movement of children to groups in which they can achieve satisfactorily.
6. Allows for extending the program for the slow learner over a longer period; provides greater challenge for the superior reader.
7. Recognizes the need for more adequate communication between school and home.
8. Offers the following advantages for pupils and staff:
   a. Gives all children the satisfaction of progressing.
   b. Leaves no gaps in the child's learning experience.
   c. Eliminates repetition of materials.
   d. Helps with early diagnosis and adjustment of slow learners and gifted children.
   e. Lessens retardation.
   f. Reduces blocking and frustrations.
   g. Removes pressure from pupils and teachers by emphasizing total growth rather than subject matter.
   h. Minimizes artificial standards.
   i. Helps make better adjusted and happier children."

* * *

Mt. Diablo School District, California--taken from a policy on departmentalization developed by a study group and adopted by the Elementary Instructional Council.

"Rationale. Although unwritten, the basic operating philosophy of the Mt. Diablo Unified School District for the organizational pattern of the elementary school is that of the self-contained classroom. Essentially what this assumes is that, where possible, the classroom teacher conducts instruction in each and all of the content areas for his assigned group of students. Any deviation from this pattern is departmentalization in some degree.

"In recent years educational pressures have arisen which have been met, in some instances, by a reassignment of teachers to a more specialized role. Justification for this reassignment is generally based on two major factors:

COMMENTS AND EVALUATIONS (Continued)

Mount Diablo, California (Continued)

1. The desirability of placing the best qualified teacher for a content area in contact with as many different students as possible is recognized.

2. The nature of some of the more recent developments in elementary curriculum requires a greater degree of background and preparation than was formerly the case.

"Examples of developments which fit this latter description have occurred in modern mathematics and foreign languages and, no doubt, will soon occur in science. In addition, departmentalization has taken place for some years in the so-called 'specialized' areas of the program--music, art, and physical education.

"Many labels have been given to this practice--platoon, teacher exchange, regrouping, team teaching, etc. Essentially, each of these approaches constitutes departmentalization to some degree, since departmentalization reduced to the simplest terms is any organizational pattern which places the student in regular contact with more than one classroom teacher for instructional purposes.

"All 'departmentalization' is not necessarily good or bad. The premise of this recommendation is that the basic values of self-contained classroom cannot be compromised too much without losing them--all, or in part. Therefore, what we are talking about are limitations which will preserve the positive elements of the self-contained classroom while recognizing the need in some instances, for modifications.

"In determining policies for the Mt. Diablo Unified School District, it is necessary that we identify our position between the poles of the fully departmentalized program and the fully self-contained classroom. The program in Mt. Diablo should reflect a primary concern for the individual child while recognizing that this concern may be reflected in a variety of ways.

"Implementation. The committee has prepared its recommendations in such a way as to designate limitations in the percentage of time that an elementary student may be instructed by other than his regularly assigned teacher.

Grades 1, 2, 3 - 10% of the 1200 minute week
Grade 4 - 30% of the 1500 minute week
Grades 5, 6 - 35% of the 1500 minute week

Not included in these percentages is any time spent in a re-grouped physical education program. Also not included are the periodic and/or occasional contacts that individual students might have with the resource teacher, speech therapist, special remedial assistance, or others with whom incidental contacts are made.

"No attempt has been made to prescribe limitations on subject matter areas because the problems of the local school should dictate this. These limitations are arbitrary and are not intended to prescribe the desirable or necessary extent of a program. In fact, in keeping with the district's point-of-view, departmentalization should exist not only within these limits, but, also, only to the extent required at the local level to accommodate a particular set of circumstances."

* * *

West Covina, California

"Disadvantages of departmentalization

1. Teacher reaction is good but there is some adjustment from self-contained in teacher-pupil identification. Some principals feel there is a great loss in this respect.

2. Sixth grade parents had some apprehensions of pushing students to maturity too rapidly. At the end of the year, however, remarks seemed most favorable.

COMMENTS AND EVALUATIONS (Continued)

West Covina, California (Continued)

3. Students handling freedom has created some problems, particularly immature sixth graders. This has been overcome by good teacher-pupil-parent conferences.

"Advantages of departmentalization

1. Teachers are able to use their special abilities to greater advantage.

2. Departmentalization provides for better teacher preparation.

3. Changing classes in all grade levels seems to make classroom discipline easier.

4. The students settle right down when coming into their classes which is attributed to a three-minute passing period.

5. Children are invariably happier, particularly with greater variety and stimulation provided by having specialized teachers in each area."

* * *

Denver, Colorado

"In the Denver public schools each elementary school is organized to best meet the demonstrated needs of the pupils and the community and in a way which best utilizes the physical plant and the competencies of the teaching staff. The organizational decisions are made cooperatively by the principal and his staff with consultation available from the executive director and other central administration personnel. Elementary school organization in our eighty-nine schools consists of three basic types: self-contained classrooms, teacher exchange, and platoon or departmentalized. Some of the strengths of the types of organization are:

1. Self-contained classroom--

   provides flexibility in the time allotment in skill and subject areas,

   provides a feeling of security in the form of more intimate pupil-teacher relationships,

   more readily provides for the relating of subjects and skills.

2. Teacher exchange--

   allows for the retention of the advantages of the self-contained classroom,

   takes advantage of special teacher competencies,

   compensates for individual teacher inadequacies.

3. Platoon or departmentalization--

   uses special teacher competencies to best advantage,

   makes best use of special physical plant facilities.

"In all schools grades 1 and 2, are in self-contained classrooms. In some schools this may be modified by a teacher exchange plan in which one teacher may teach music for a neighboring class and have her art taught by the teacher of the neighboring class. This arrangement enables teachers to utilize their particular strengths. In grades 3-6, organization may be any one of the three types or a combination of the three.

"In some of our schools, grouping is homogeneous with ability, achievement, and teacher appraisal being used as criteria. In most of our schools the grouping is heterogeneous with grouping for

COMMENTS AND EVALUATIONS (Continued)

Denver, Colorado (Continued)

instruction taking place in each classroom. In approximately ten schools, pupils are grouped heterogeneously for the non-academic subjects and regrouped for instruction in one or more of the academic subjects. This procedure takes advantage of the social and emotional values of heterogeneous grouping and allows for narrowing the range of ability and achievement for instruction in specific subjects."

* * *

West Hartford, Connecticut

"Scheduling is a difficult problem. It is necessary to find a way to set aside blocks of time. Demands of art, music, physical education, and foreign language require the setting aside of specific periods in the week for this purpose.

"The general reaction is that better education results from newer patterns of instruction but as yet we have been unable to evaluate this more than a general sampling of opinion.

"Departmentalization takes different forms in different schools depending on the skills of the teaching staff, the facilities available, and the general nature of the children to be taught. Problems of overcrowding inhibit innovation as the larger the individual classes, the less the innovations that are likely to be developed."

* * *

Polk County, Florida

"This report is a reflection of last year's practices. Many schools were trying this type of organization for the first time. Parents and teachers found many phases of this program to be inadequate. Children became 'clock-watchers,' lost time in proceeding to the next class. When groups were divided according to achievement on test scores, wide variation as to amount and kind of learning and ways of learning existed within the group. Pupils did not relate what was learned in one subject area to another. Departmentalization is expected to decline in our elementary schools this year."

* * *

DeKalb County, Georgia

"We have found that some form of departmentalization in the upper elementary grades is desirable. Our experience has been that three or four large blocks of time is preferable to assigning a different teacher for each academic subject. We refer to our scheduling as 'back-to-back' scheduling. For example, one sixth-grade teacher may teach math, science, health, and physical education during a two-hour block of time while another sixth-grade teacher may be teaching English, spelling, and reading. A third teacher may be teaching all of the social sciences during this same period of time. As the periods change, the teachers simply repeat their lessons as the students rotate. This approach has built-in flexibility. For example, the math-science teacher might spend the entire period on a lab experience one day and the entire period on a math review the following day, without upsetting the schedule. Teacher morale and enthusiasm is higher when one is teaching in his field of special interest and competence. Success of the approach depends upon the attitude and interest of the teachers involved."

* * *

COMMENTS AND EVALUATIONS (Continued)

Gary, Indiana

"Our most serious problems of scheduling result from the need to include classes in multiples of six units to carry out this plan. This does result in some inflexibility since not all schools are of similar size with a similar number of classes at each grade or age level.

"In a survey of our entire teaching staff, there was strong support for this type of organization. We are moving from departmentalization in eight schools to twenty-seven schools for the next school year. Parents and students have expressed strong support of this program.

"A strong need for teachers of the same groups to confer and interact does exist. We are making provision for this in our program."

* * *

Indianapolis, Indiana

"Several years ago, the departmentalized program was used in grades 4-6 in certain schools. It was felt at the beginning of this plan that it had the advantage of specialization, but it was soon learned that it was difficult to find teachers who were adequately prepared.

"From research and consensus of teachers, principals, and administrators it was decided that self-contained classrooms were more effective for children of this age. The correlation of subject matter permitted by the self-contained classroom gives intermediate grade children more stability, confidence, and a better rounded program of instruction. It gives teachers an opportunity to work more intensively with individual pupils, to understand their problems, and guide them to achieve their greatest potential in all subject matter areas."

* * *

Cedar Rapids, Iowa

"The Cedar Rapids 4-5-6 program is semi-departmentalized of some fifteen years standing. All pupils meet for a half day in an uninterrupted block for social studies and language arts. The other half day the pupil goes to a special art room, physical education, and music. Arithmetic and science are also period subjects. Various combinations of teaching assignments are possible under this arrangement. One might teach a social studies-language arts block for a half day and teach arithmetic, art, or music for the other half day. Another assignment would involve a combination of arithmetic and science. Other combinations are possible. The program is extremely well accepted by pupils, teachers, and parents. Finding trained and qualified teachers for some of the special areas becomes a problem at times. Teachers like the various types of teaching combinations. This program provides for a more extensive treatment of art-music and physical education, besides offering a more challenging program in science and arithmetic."

* * *

Wichita, Kansas

"Principals are encouraged to make the most of the teacher's talents. In the primary grades, the self-contained classroom is the most common pattern. However, some of the intermediate grades have different types of organization. For example--

"Two teachers exchange subjects: one teaches two classes in arithmetic and the other teaches two classes in science.

"Three teachers are involved in exchanging three subjects. One person teaches arithmetic in grades 4, 5, and 6; another, science; the third, reading.

"In some schools, the children are with a teacher a half-day and go to the second teacher the other half."

* * *

COMMENTS AND EVALUATIONS (Continued)

Buncombe County, North Carolina

"In an effort to capitalize on the experience and educational background of a number of teachers who are certified in high school subject areas, our elementary schools have experimented with various types of approaches in the utilization of teaching personnel at the seventh- and eighth-grade levels. The approach which seems to offer the greatest possibilities is that of using large blocks of time for scheduling allied subjects, e.g., language arts and social studies or a science and math block.

"The two distinct advantages in this type of organization are that it affords a modified approach to complete departmentalization at the high school level and utilizes the background preparation of teachers with high school certification in special subject areas. The outstanding disadvantage is that these teachers in the elementary school are not prepared to teach reading, music, and art and these areas are neglected."

* * *

Akron, Ohio

"We have no firm over-all policy for schools to organize to use departmental teaching specialists. As principals and staff groups analyze testing results, many schools group homogeneously by achievement in mathematics and science. A determination as to teacher assignments is made by the principal and grade level teachers recognizing the individual teacher's special interests, background knowledge in the area, and skill. Because of the recent advance in both mathematics and science, these fields especially lend themselves to being taught by specialists. Language arts and social studies are other areas utilized along with these two. The fine arts and physical education are taught by specialists.

"Our groups are self-contained in grades 1 through 4 with the use of specialists in grades 5 and 6. Some schools use a modified Joplin Plan in reading in grade 3."

* * *

Cincinnati, Ohio

"The Cincinnati Public Schools employ a semi-departmental plan of organization in the intermediate grades. Each class spends one-half day in the same classroom with a teacher of language arts-social studies. For one-fourth of the day they have mathematics and science with another teacher. The remaining one-fourth of the day is spent with qualified teachers of physical education and health, music, and art, these subjects being on an alternating schedule. This permits a self-contained staff, except that in small schools music and art teachers may serve two schools. Sometimes certain classes are self-contained or arrangements are made for a group of disturbed children or low achievers to have the same teacher for three-fourths of the day. Under this plan pupils have the advantage of being instructed by teachers with special competency and interest in a subject without large groups being taught together, and without specialists being carried as added members of the staff or being spread thinly over several schools.

"Its successful use requires that teachers be sensitive to a pupil's personal needs as well as his instructional needs and that teachers plan for ways to relate the work in one field to another. Many cross-references occur in our Intermediate Manual and study programs at the local school level deal with common problems and the needs of individual children. With any plan of cooperative work with the same children, whether it is a form of departmental or of team teaching, the staff and leaders must plan together to consider the needs of individual children.

"Research gives no clear-cut answer as to whether departmental or self-contained classroom organization results in better education of children. Most children enjoy having more than one teacher."

* * *

COMMENTS AND EVALUATIONS (Continued)

Cleveland, Ohio

"Cleveland elementary schools have been operated on a departmental basis for many years. The departmental program is in effect in grades 4, 5, and 6 in 126 elementary schools. (Four of our schools have primary classes only and therefore do not have departmentalization.)

"The extent of the departmental program and the scheduling of the program varies in each building. Usually each classroom teacher teaches his own class in mathematics and in language arts (reading, English, spelling, and handwriting). The subjects of social studies, science, and, sometimes health are scheduled on a departmental basis if there are teachers in a building who have special interest, training, and skill in teaching those subjects.

"In most buildings, music, art, and physical education classes are set up on a departmental schedule. We have many teachers hired to teach those subjects only, and who have no homeroom assignments.

"Teachers, parents, and pupils seem to like the departmental organization. It permits pupils to have contact with various teachers, and it also permits teachers to capitalize on their own special knowledges and skills in working with pupils."

* * *

Tulsa, Oklahoma

"We have used the semi-departmental organization in the Tulsa schools since 1924. In our judgment the plan is more effective than any other in offering an enriched, well-balanced educational program for boys and girls in the elementary school. The semi-departmental plan combines the advantages of both the self-contained type of organization and complete departmentalization, with few of the disadvantages of either. Our plan recognizes and contributes to the development of special abilities of children and teachers. A recent survey of parent opinion in Tulsa indicates that a large majority of parents favor the plan. It is our opinion that much the same degree of preference would be indicated by children."

* * *

Florence, South Carolina

"The most successful program has been in sixth grade with each teacher teaching her own pupils the complete language arts program. Other subjects are taught by moving pupils from room to room to a teacher who is the strongest in a particular subject. Pupils begin and end the day with the same teacher. This program has been accepted well by pupils, teachers, and parents. Pupils move from the sixth grade to junior high, where we have total departmentalization."

* * *

Dallas, Texas

"The broad departmental plan has been used in Dallas for many years, and although there are some dissidents, it remains steadfastly preferred by the majority, perhaps for the following main reasons:

"It enables special centers in the building, with appropriate equipment and qualified teachers in each area. Each building has an auditorium, a gymnasium, a play room, a library, and from one to three rooms for music, art, and science.

"The blocks of time for language arts and social studies are long (1½ to 2 hours), and are taught by the same teacher, thus enabling flexibility, unit organization, homeroom identity, and other features advocated in self-contained programs, while

COMMENTS AND EVALUATIONS (Continued)

Dallas, Texas (Continued)

at the same time allowing for special centers and teachers for other parts of the curriculum, and an intermingling of class groups in some parts of the day.

"Pupils may be associated with the same teachers over a period of several years in some vertical areas, such as music, art, and physical education, thus enabling continuity for pupils and an opportunity for the teacher to study children through various stages of growth and development."

* * *

Alexandria, Virginia

"The seventh grade has been departmentalized for three years. It will become a part of an intermediate school beginning 1965-66. Special teachers in music, industrial arts, art, home economics, and French are provided. Each pupil takes two electives from these subjects, meeting 45 minutes each day on alternate days. In addition, students are enrolled in language arts, social studies, science, and mathematics. They are generally grouped by ability in each subject. It would appear that this organization works at this grade level, and it seems to have been accepted well by all concerned."

* * *

Lynchburg, Virginia

"During the past two school years we have departmentalized our seventh grades with anticipation of moving to a 6-3-3 type of administrative organization. The departmentalization has been limited to the seventh grade in the academic areas of English, math, social studies, and science. The teachers use a fairly flexible schedule with some large group instruction and grouping within the individual classes. We have tried homogeneous grouping for instructional purposes, but as a result of evaluation, decided to stick strictly with heterogeneous grouping for the departmentalized situation.

"The parents' reaction has been very favorable due primarily to the public relations program of individual schools that have kept the parents informed of the program at all times. There has been some criticism from parents who would prefer their child in a self-contained situation. Moving from a self-contained situation to a departmentalized situation may create problems in schools where certain teachers have built a reputation in a community."

* * *

Virginia Beach, Virginia

"Departmentalization is gradually replacing self-contained classrooms at seventh grade level. Reactions from students, parents, and teachers are favorable. In a growing school system, departmentalization allows us to make use of teachers prepared for subject matter teaching at the secondary level in our upper elementary grades."

* * *

Seattle, Washington

"We have moved away from the highly departmentalized forms of elementary school organization, on the whole, but allow a great deal of freedom to individual schools to organize as they think best for the particular situation. We do insist that any departmentalization (exchange of classes) be for the purpose of improved education, and not merely for convenience. We have insisted that any exchange of classes result in an advantage for both subjects exchanged. We had the problem of exchanging 25 minutes of any subject (even half of an arithmetic period) to accommodate the teaching of music. This practice has been eliminated."

* * *

COMMENTS AND EVALUATIONS (Continued)

Tacoma, Washington

"Grouping across grade lines has been successful in two of our schools trying a partial departmentalization plan. One of these schools is located in an area of low income with the usual problems of disadvantaged children. The across-grade-lines plan has helped tremendously in developing both reading and arithmetic programs that meet the individual needs of these children.

"The school year 1965-66 will find three or four more of our schools moving into a partial departmentalized program. We feel this is the right direction to move when the principal and staff are ready."

* * *

Cabell County, West Virginia

"Departmentalization has been fairly successful in most of our schools. There has been no adverse criticism on the part of most parents, and students seem to enjoy the idea of changing classes and of having different teachers--especially in the fifth and sixth grades. We have also had some success with our departmentalization because ability grouping is taken into consideration both in placing children in homerooms as well as within each subject area. This helps to eliminate some of the restrictions imposed at times through use of departmentalization.

"On the other side of the picture, however, there are disadvantages to the departmentalized program. Class periods are usually 50 to 60 minutes, yet it is found that more time is needed. For example, in social studies a good discussion may be in progress and if it is time to change classes the discussion has to terminate immediately. This tends to stifle interest in the topic under study. Also under such a program the relationship between all subjects is not always stressed. A few schools are considering a larger block of time for their departmental program."

The information in this study is based upon responses to the following questionnaire items:

ELEMENTARY DEPARTMENTALIZATION

Definition of departmentalization: Students have more than one teacher for their academic subjects (English, social studies, mathematics, and science). Each teacher is solely responsible for a specific subject or group of subjects. This should not be confused with the use of special subject teachers, such as art or music, to supplement the teaching in an otherwise self-contained classroom.

1. Total number of elementary schools in your system _____

   Number of elementary schools with one or more departmentalized grades _____

   Fill in below the number of schools using departmentalization at each grade level

   Grade 1 _____ Grade 4 _____ Grade 7 _____ } If included in elementary schools

   Grade 2 _____ Grade 5 _____ Grade 8 _____ }

   Grade 3 _____ Grade 6 _____

2. Indicate which of the patterns of departmentalization listed below are used in your system. (Place a 1 by the type most often used, a 2 by the type next frequent, etc.)

   _____ Each academic subject is taught by a separate teacher

   _____ The "dual progress" plan is used. One teacher is responsible for the language arts and social studies area--the remaining subjects are taught by specialists

   _____ Language arts and social studies are taught by one teacher, arithmetic and science by another, and the special subjects by additional teachers

   _____ Other (Please describe) _____

3. Is it possible for students to move across grade level lines, in your departmentalized program? Yes _____ No _____

   If yes, please explain below.

4. Is it possible for students to move from ability level to ability level in the same grade, in your departmentalized program? Yes _____ No _____

   If yes, please explain below.

5. In the space below, we would appreciate any comments you might wish to add regarding your system's experience with elementary departmentalization. Comments might cover scheduling and grouping practices; teacher, parent, and student reactions; advantages and disadvantages, etc. It is hoped that an "open-end" item of this type will enable you to describe your program more fully than would additional forced-choice items.

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